

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCE
Religious Studies (6RS02) Paper 1F
The Study of the New Testament

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6RS02 1F The Study of the New Testament

General Comments

The 2016 examination season is a testimony to the high level of engagement with selected studies drawn from a very wide range of academic fields. Over the life of this specification there has been consistent evidence of superb research on topics that are clearly of great interest to candidates. This legacy of academic achievement has been inspirational for examiners whose privilege it is to see what can be achieved by our candidates. The new specification will provide a different assessment experience and centres will find that their excellent resources can be integrated into future schemes of work.

The high standard of work evidenced in June 2016 was no exception to historical high standards as candidates demonstrated a very high level of independent enquiry which clearly demonstrated what their chosen area of investigation had meant to them as a learning experience. Candidates showcased their knowledge of a particular academic field in the way they identified a line of enquiry, clearly expressed their view, analysed key concepts and deployed evidence with coherent understanding of their task whilst fluently evaluating a wide range of source material that they had at their disposal. The enthusiasm for, and knowledge of the chosen topic was clearly conveyed in many answers that were truly academic in their approach. A few centres continue to focus on the same or similar topics for all their candidates, whereas other centres permitted considerable choice for individual candidates. Candidates were mostly very well prepared for the examination and it was evident that centres used their specialist resources and interests to encourage candidates to research in depth a particular area of study. The 'Investigations' unit has a definite academic purpose and aims to involve students as active participants pursuing open-ended enquiries with an emphasis on independent learning. Questions were designed to be inclusive of all possible approaches to various topics and all valid answers were considered. At this stage in the life of the specification it is difficult to find new things to report because, in the main, centres possess a very high degree of expertise and this is clearly evidenced in the work that is produced on the day of the examination.

There are still a few areas for development that are reported similarly each year and once again 2016 showed evidence of a small minority of centres that need to take this on board. Centres are encouraged to review their performance in 2016 against all or some of the following points:

- Whilst most centres had entered their candidates for the correct option there were still a few entries for particular Areas of Study where consideration regarding entry for a different Area of Study may have been beneficial to the candidate. It is important to ensure candidates know which area of their investigation is the best fit for the question they answer on the paper.

- A small number of candidates were not entered by the centre for the correct paper.
- There was evidence of candidates choosing a different question on the paper to the question they had clearly prepared for before the examination. In some of these cases the candidate was using material suitable for Question 1 to answer Question 3 (or vice versa) and not really grappling fully with the demands of the question. This practice does not always work to the best effect as the candidate might end up answering neither question as fully as possible. It must be noted that each question was written for ONE of three topics within each particular Area of Study.
- Candidates were not penalised if correct entries were not made or a cross was put in a box that did not match the answer or if no box was ticked at all. However, evidence shows that candidates have decided that the question for a topic that they clearly had not prepared for, looked more inviting and selected that question but that did not necessarily mean they were best prepared to answer that question. Whilst it is good to note that less candidates than 2015 attempted this approach there were still some candidates in this session who answered a question they had not prepared for and may need to be reminded which question their material is best directed at and be advised to answer that question.
- Candidates using a pre-prepared essay inclusive of centre selected quotes often ignored the question.

Examiners were encouraged to mark positively and to credit all valid material according to the mark scheme and question paper. Centres should ensure that candidates are entered for the option that matches their Area of Study and that candidates are clear about which question they have been prepared for on the paper. There is still evidence of centres studying Papers 1B and 1F being entered for 1A. This might be an oversight regarding filling out the form – centres must choose 6RS02 and then identify which of the seven papers from 1A to 1G is the specific entry.

Variation in achievement was related to the two assessment objectives. These objectives should receive prominent attention in the process of the investigation. Importantly there must be explicit attention to both objectives in the examination answer and also to the question that is intended to focus the answer. Each question consistently referred to the assessment objectives with the trigger word 'Examine' for AO1 and 'Comment on' for AO2. These dictated the structure of the question and helped candidates to plan their answers. It would be advisable for candidates to pay regular attention to the level descriptors for these assessment objectives as a way of monitoring their development and progress during their investigations. The phrase 'with reference to the topic you have investigated' will always appear in the question to ensure that the generic question can be answered with material from any appropriate investigation. The mark scheme itself is generic to all questions but the answer itself is not necessarily generic as candidates are

expected to use their material to *answer the question*. The purpose of the question is to challenge candidates to adapt their material so that at the highest levels they may demonstrate a coherent understanding of the task based on the selection of their material. Widely deployed evidence/arguments/sources were evident in well-structured responses to the task whereby a clearly expressed viewpoint was supported by well-deployed evidence and reasoned argument. There was skilful deployment of religious language in many answers and the fluency of good essays showed command over the material; such command makes for high outcomes and rewards the amount of hard work done by the candidate. Many candidates had clearly learned much in the process and their overall grasp of the issues involved and command over their material was highly commendable.

Candidates at the lower end of achievement struggled with the demands of the question. These candidates were insecure with their management of material and did not know how to best structure their content to answer the specific question. Success can be undermined by writing up a rote-learned answer which was not adapted to the question set or by answering a question that has been written for a topic they have not studied. In 2016 there was still far too much evidence of rote-learned answers using the same structure and material inclusive of quotes; whilst much information was relevant to the topic and consequently was awarded in terms of AO1, there was a significant lack of engagement with the specific demands of the question and consequently marks for AO2 were low, with only generic evaluation provided. This approach is contrasted with excellent praxis whereby candidates were trained to answer the question; arguably, this is evidence of good practice but at the lower end some candidates thought it was sufficient to simply use the question stimulus at the end of each paragraph. The best answers were those which were guided by the statement as opposed to simply '*tagging it on*' to anticipated content. A balanced approach to the question that meets the highest levels of achievement according to both assessment objectives is obviously desirable and the generic question accommodates many possible routes to success whereby any valid approach to the question was credited.

Finally, there is increasing evidence of poorly written scripts that are almost illegible – scripts are scanned onto software for marking and even though the examiner can enlarge the screen many scripts were still very difficult to read. Candidates are strongly advised to develop their practical handwriting skills and then practice writing under timed conditions. Candidates who cannot achieve legible writing may need to consider accessing the facility for word processing their answers according to the regulations. Centres are assured that much time was invested in attempting to decipher illegible answers but there is always the risk that a badly written word/phrase/paragraph could be misinterpreted and it is best to avoid the chances of this occurring. Examiners understand the time constraints that candidates are writing under but this problem regarding illegible handwriting seems to be on the increase. Centres need to address this issue because the current format for examinations requires candidates' ability to sustain handwriting and academic standards under examination pressure.

That said, the excellent work of centres and candidates in 6RS02 bears testimony to the academic potential of candidates that is a joy to behold when it is fully realised.

Specific Comments

Candidates on the whole gave comprehensive and detailed responses to each question. Evaluation was evident through direct exposition of the New Testament and critical appraisal of particular relevant standpoints. Question 3 was hallmarked by a 'structure' of candidate response that was evidently framed on a model answer which was hoped to fit likely questions. Although this direction does not negatively impact on examiner marking there should be an awareness that such modelling may lead to constraining the natural and nurtured ability of candidates to produce something original and compelling to read. This perennial problem has been reported on every year.

Question 1 Religion and Science

The low number of candidates who answer this question means that there does not seem to be evidence of new approaches to the question therefore much of the comments below may seem to have been said before but are repeated for the sake of overcoming perennial issues.

The question provided wide scope for discussing whether scientific advances are only an apparent threat to an understanding of New Testament teachings if the New Testament has not been understood correctly; the stronger candidates handled this question very well and skilfully navigated through their material to answer the question with conviction. There are many different ways of approaching the question such as examining Models for the relationship of religion and science and commenting on how far these models can allow for divine activity found in the New Testament. Models of God can, in varying degrees, allow for scientific explanations of New Testament narrative. It is a shame that the take up for this question remains low as the potential of this area of study remain largely unexplored.

Candidates are reluctant to discuss with confidence how the study of the interface between religion and science might have real relevance for the study of the New Testament. There is scope for examining the historical interaction between religion and science by focusing on the dialogue between Christianity and the natural sciences. The New Testament provides rich material for the application of natural science, for example, miracle narratives and eschatology. Very few candidates addressed, for example, how divine intervention in the New Testament could be interpreted by examining the possibilities for scientific explanations such as emergentist theory. Most candidates concentrated on the Hume's response to miracles, with varying success and the views of Dawkins were ever-present; candidates focusing on Hume often omitted aspects of Hume's critique that is largely scientific such as cause and effect, the principle of evidence and the laws of nature. It is a shame that studies on Divine Intervention from the last ten years have still not been accessed by many candidates because these provide more material for candidates to draw upon.

Finally candidates who presented academic answers to this question are to be commended for how well-versed they were on the New Testament and related philosophical issues. Successful responses had a solid grasp of New Testament scholarship and how this related to the religion and science debate. At the top end, many answers were excellent and received very high marks. There was a clear and detailed understanding of the issues and of the religious and theological meanings behind them. Candidates referred to a range of scholars, both ancient and modern, and attempted a detailed theological discussion that was firmly contextually situated within the religion and science relationship. There was proficient use and understanding of complex theological ideas such as 'salvation' and the use of New Testament symbolism was impressive. Clearly the stronger candidates were very well prepared and had achieved a very wide range of knowledge of relevant scholarship.

In the lower ranges of responses candidates were comfortable with material from either religion or science but had some difficulty in relating both. The entry for this question was low this year so there are no essay exemplars included for question 1.

Question 2 New Testament Ethics and Morality

At the top end, the answers to this question were really excellent, offering detailed ethical analysis of New Testament teachings, coupled with a range of useful scholarship and proficient use of religious language.

However, in the mid-range, many concentrated a little too heavily on Situation Ethics and Natural Moral Law at the expense of New Testament exegesis. Answers tended to rely mostly on ethical theory, with New Testament material added as something of an after-thought. Greater parity between the New Testament and Ethics content within such responses would raise achievement. There was also evidence of an essay structure which meant that candidates were devoting a significant part of their essay to the Old Testament at the expense of New Testament exemplification. This area of study is explicitly focused on the New Testament and not the Old Testament; the study of the Old Testament is already offered in another unit (6RS02/1E). The study of the New Testament already suggests a different focus and in the time allowed candidates might depress their achievement if they try to focus on both the Old and New Testaments in their response. That said, it is completely valid to use the Old Testament to root New Testament teachings but candidates are to be reminded that this approach calls for precision and awareness of the New Testament context within which they are writing.

At the lower-end, a number of students concentrated on a GCSE-style analysis of marriage, abortion and homosexuality, lacking any real depth of discussion or scholarship. Once again, as noted last year, it must be stressed that some topics share generic ideas across a number of different areas and it is vital that candidates know the **distinctive** features of their investigation for example; there can be overlap with topics addressed in Area 1C and candidates who focussed more on classical ethical theory rather than New Testament ethics might have used the material they investigated more effectively in Area 1C. The same point also applies to the distinctive focus that is required by either a Study of the Old Testament or the New Testament.

This reminder has been offered last year but still seems to present a problem for a significant number of weaker candidates albeit possibly to a lesser number of candidates.

ESSAY EXTRACT

The next paragraph is an extract from a very competent essay last year. This candidate demonstrated a very high standard response to Question 2 and clearly showed the potential for academic scholarship in this topic. The candidate was familiar with a wide range of New Testament teachings that were not confined to gospel narrative. There was no difficulty with addressing the question consistently throughout the essay as can be seen in the extract from the introduction.

'For the purpose of this essay, I will investigate whether it is worth applying NT moral teachings on marriage and divorce in the modern world in the face of perceived difficulties. Such a conception arises from the fact that since the atrocities witnessed in the 21st century; modern society has evolved to take a more liberal, situational stance to modern problems that often appear to reject the legalistic nature of the Christian bible. Therefore, some institutions, such as the Roman Catholic Church, remain keen to stress that the New Testament teachings on marriage and divorce are absolute and are worth applying to a 'broken' society regardless of how difficult it may be. Conversely, more liberal Christians argue that the New Testament moral teachings should be reinterpreted to make it easier to apply to modern problems and thus worth trying to do so.'

The candidate continues a quality discussion of the issues and it is evident that New Testament teachings are known and clearly applied:

'In terms of marriage, the New Testament is categorical in Hebrews 13:4 when it says that 'marriage should be honoured by all' which is a resolute example of how marriage is traditionally viewed as a sanctified institution which demands the respect of the society of which it belongs to. Henceforth, the Roman Catholic Church argues that marriage, as a God-given gift, is the perfect environment in which to fulfil the decree of Genesis 1:28, 'Be fruitful and multiply'. They would argue that marriage, in being a fundamental pillar of society, provides love and stability for couples to fulfil God's plan for mankind. Conversely more liberal Christian would point towards 1 Corinthians 13, 'love never fails', to illustrate that love in itself is the paramount, most important teaching of the new testament and thus supersedes the legalistic commands.....found elsewhere in the bible.

Finally in the conclusion the candidate declares that:

'As long as God is in the centre, New Testament teachings are worth applying to marriage, divorce and relationships in general on a situational basis.

The conclusion itself was fully substantiated by other material from the gospels, 2 Timothy, 1 Corinthians and Romans plus relevant scholarship related to the candidate's argument for a situational context for practising New Testament teachings.

This 13-page essay may not have had the same sophistication as the extract above but it is clear from reading the whole study how much care the candidate has taken to cover the topic extensively. The level of engagement continues at a steady pace and the thorough conclusion drew a competent piece of work to a convincing end. This exemplar shows that hard work truly pays off and there is no substitute for working through available scholarship and making it 'your own'. The candidate deserved the reward for high levels of achievement in both assessment objectives.

Marriage is a total communion which can be broken by any prolonged infidelity, whether it be the unwillingness to share of self, squandering of monies or other betrayal of trusts. The Bible presents marriage as a legal union, which is acknowledged before God publically and sealed by sex (in order to populate the earth). Marriage is deemed a creation ordinance and since God has divine authority it is divinely instituted.

Genesis 2:24 states for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

However, this teaching and other biblical references regarding sexual relationships has long been a concern for religious believers.

This concern is still relevant to life in the 21st century and has resulted in widely differing views. This concern

is still relevant not only on a religious spectrum but it has been debated in the media, Parliament and the Law. For example the Ten Commandments forbid adultery and although adultery may be considered immoral and it is legitimate grounds for divorce, it is not a crime. Similarly sex with many heterosexual partners may imply an inconsistent lifestyle but many people today do not regard this as an issue of morality.

The Old Testament and New Testament are similar in their views that marriage is a lifelong commitment as Ephesians 4:2-3 states 'be completely humble and gentle living with one another in love make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit'. This emphasises how the husband and wife should do their best to keep their union.

Divorce is not mentioned in the creation account it is first recognised when Moses ~~de~~ lays down laws to protect a woman ~~being accused~~ if she remarries. If a man marries a woman and she becomes displeasing to him because he finds something 'indecent' about her he hands her a certificate of divorce. At the time of Jesus two prominent schools of thought debated what was meant by something 'indecent'. The school of Hillel ~~also~~ ~~believes it~~ allowed divorce for ~~trivialities~~ ^{trivialities} (such as spoiling the dinner) whereas the school of Shammai only allowed it for sexual offences (probably not adultery) because the punishment for this was death ^(Leviticus 20:10). However Malachi 2:16 states 'I hate divorce says the Lord God of Israel' which shows God did not intend divorce neither did he approve of it.

The Synoptic Gospels record the Pharisees asking Jesus if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?

Mark's Gospel notes Jesus' reply as "therefore what God has put together let no man separate." This highlights the sanctity of marriage and how it should never end.

However, Matthew 5:32 notes Jesus' response as ~~sexual~~ a man must not divorce his wife except for sexual immorality which states that Jesus only allows divorce for sexual immorality which means this is almost impossible to apply to modern day problems as today people divorce for other reasons such as ~~ad~~ domestic violence.

Furthermore St. Paul only allows divorce for desertion as he states, "if the unbeliever leaves then let it be so", which means in the case of an unbeliever leaving a

believer divorce is permitted.

This was reasonable at the time as Tyler and Reid observe 'conversion meant total abandonment of a traditional way of life!'

However in the UK as of 2013 42% of marriages end in divorce.

Divorce is permitted for unreasonable behaviour, ^{defection} separation and adultery.

Moreover, Divorce cost the UK taxpayer £46 billion for effects on ~~business~~ health, legal aid, loss of work hours and other factors.

It is difficult to follow Paul and Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce as they were teaching in contexts different ~~far~~ from today.

Jesus was ~~the~~ answering the Pharisee's ~~was~~ question and they were concerned about being zealous in ^{keeping} God's commandments, so he could send them a Messiah to overcome the Romans in this since it had a theological dimension rather than an ethical dimension therefore the

Rabbi Hillel, Shammai debate is no longer relevant.

Furthermore Paul was addressing a specific situation in the Early Church of Pagan Conversion in Corinth therefore his debate is not relevant.

However it may be worth trying to apply Jesus' teaching on Marriage and divorce as the Roman Catholic Church believe that the marriage vows are indissoluble. If we adhere to the teaching in this way it is not impossible to overcome the difficulties raised by Jesus' teaching to modern day problems because if people were to remain married it would save the UK economy more money and it would avoid the emotional distress divorced couples go through.

Jesus and Paul appear to be Situationists and in this sense the moral teaching of the New Testament can be applied situationally to modern day problems. John Robinson believed that the moral teachings of Jesus should not be understood legally, prescribing what all Christians must do but as illustrations of what love can at any moment require of anyone.

Fletcher used Situation Ethics to justify divorce as he stated "if the emotional and spiritual parents of both parents and children in a particular family can be best served by divorce then love requires it. In this sense it is not impossible to overcome the teachings of the New Testament to modern day problems because they can be applied situationally.

However, some people may argue that it is difficult to apply New Testament teaching to life in the 21st century and modern day problems due to

inconsistency in telling people how to live their lives. Paul's teaching in Ephesians 5 on women to submit to their husbands is almost impossible to overcome to modern day problems as women are equal to men based on modern day laws, ~~are~~ and are financially independent. However it can be argued that ~~this~~ the marriage relationship models Christ's relationship with his church which is rooted in love and sacrifice. The man must love his wife even if it goes against his own detriments. It is a man's nature to deserve to receive respect, Paul did not say this because the woman is subordinate to the man. In this sense if a woman respects her husband and he in turn loves her, domestic violence would be prevented, therefore it is possible to ~~apply New~~ overcome the difficulties New Testament teachings impose on marriage and divorce to modern day problems.

The legislation of same-sex marriages in England and Wales in 2014 shows that people's understanding of the right way to live has changed considerably since the time of Jesus. It is difficult to apply New Testament teachings on same-sex marriage because Paul and Jesus do not explicitly address this issue. Paul teaches against homosexuality because 1 Corinthians 6:9 states 'neither the sexually immoral or adulterers or men who have sex with men shall inherit the Kingdom of God'. This is impossible to overcome in terms of same-sex marriage because today homosexuality is acceptable. However advancement in Biblical scholarship states that Paul was referring to pagan same-sex worship in the temples in Corinth which was prevalent at the time. Han observes sex with ~~heterosexual~~ ^{homosexual} partner would only harm a few neurotic persons, who are literally made ill by the very thought of it!

Furthermore Paul ~~teachings~~^{teaches} that 'it is better to marry than burn with ~~per~~ passion. This teaching is impossible to apply to modern day problems because many people believe cohabitation to be an acceptable means of living.

However research states that 27% people who cohabit and have a child separate before the child is five, compared to ~~five~~ nine percent of 'married parents'. This shows that people today should aim for marriage in order to set up a stable environment for their child's upbringing and therefore the difficulties in New Testament teaching is not impossible to overcome.

Paul taught in 1 Corinthians that at the resurrection there will be no marriages, 'this contributes to another reason that marriage is not suitable, because it ends at the resurrection. However Paul was teaching at the time of the

~~where~~ imminent Parousia where Christians were anticipating the coming of Christ and therefore believed that they should be evangelising and furthering the Kingdom of God. This is almost impossible to overcome today because more people are getting married and they do not live with a sense of urgency of Christ's return.

However many churches still anticipate Christ's coming and Christians recite the Creed in almost every Sunday in anticipation of this. Furthermore nuns, priests and monks still remain celibate in order to concentrate on the kingdom, in this sense it may be worth trying to apply New Testament teaching to life in the 21st century.

~~Hebrews States~~ Paul's letter to the Hebrews states 'marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed be kept pure, for God ~~would~~ will judge the sexually immoral. In a society where sex outside

marriage is the social norm it is almost impossible to overcome this teaching.

However remaining celibate until marriage is better because it prevents people from the stress of unwanted pregnancies^{and} STDs, therefore it is possible to apply these teachings to modern day problems.

In Conclusion it is difficult to apply New Testament teaching to modern day problems due to the differing views. Jesus not only appears to contradict Paul but he also seems to contradict himself (In Matthew's Gospel Jesus allows divorce for adultery but in Mark's Gospel he refers back to the creation ordinance). Also the increase of the divorce rate to almost 1 in 2 marriages shows that people no longer see the bible as an authoritative guide that tells them how to live their lives. There are even divides in religious ~~believer~~ beliefs.

Some Conservative Christians believe that God knows what's best for humans and therefore human beings must adhere to his commandments. Tyler and Reid observe God commandments are not arbitrary but are true, since what God wishes upon man to do is that which is written in itself even if humans do not perceive the reason for this.

However Marriage demands the respect of the society it belongs to do therefore people should not divorce for reasons other than desertion and adultery. However more liberal Christians would argue that love is the most important thing and divorce is not inherently wrong only a lack of love.

~~In taking to~~ This marriage situation Ethics makes the New Testament teaching on marriage and divorce more easier to apply because it takes into account specific situation. Maybe if people in the 21st century apply the New Testament teachings situationally to modern day problems it will not be impossible to overcome.

Question 3 Life After Death

Every year this question attracts a very high level of interest and enthusiasm for the one question that arguably can only be a matter for speculation during our lifetime. This is by far the most popular question and attracts many excellent responses at the top end with a clear and concise analysis of New Testament teachings, coupled with philosophical debate. The range of scholarship and textual analysis was impressive and candidates were comfortable with handling their material to answer the question.

In the mid-range there is still too much emphasis on philosophical arguments about life after death, with the New Testament used as an after-thought. Also, many concentrated solely on Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 15 or on the dilemma of the empty tomb, but lacked the depth of detail and scholarship required for the highest marks. Some candidates were less comfortable with New Testament theology and tended to concentrate on confining themselves to re-writing the textual narrative without developing further ideas from it; others linked philosophical ideas at a basic level or made little reference to the New Testament. Quite a number missed the real meaning of the question and concentrated on tangential issues. A problem regarding the use of biblical material still persists and the point made for question 2 applies to this question also: weaker candidates writing a few pages on Old Testament roots for beliefs regarding Life after Death could have made more effective use of their time by ensuring that the significance of this material for New Testament teachings was clearly drawn out. Whilst Old Testament teachings are acknowledged as relevant material, candidates must link this material explicitly to their study of the New Testament. It must be noted that whilst this problem still persists, a far greater number of candidates made a much better job of placing any reference to the Old Testament into context. Candidates were not marked down for this approach but credited for how they used this material within a study of the New Testament if they managed to make it clear why Old Testament narratives and quotes were essential to their argument. This question evidenced the greatest disparity amongst responses which ranged from candidates being very well prepared to others having difficulty with answering the question.

One final point that still needs addressing by some centres: there was still evidence of candidates, presumably from the same centre, presenting a wide range of material organised within a recognisable structure, illustrated by the same quotes and scholars. Some of these candidates struggled to adapt their learned material to the demands of the question. It is also questionable how far candidates had engaged with independent research as they wrote essays that were similar in style with some paragraphs word for word. A02 achievement is upwardly levelled by this practice if candidates fail to comment on their material with the question in mind. It is not enough to tag on the question at the end of the section by arguing that this material shows 'x' if they cannot explain why this is the case.

All of the above is intended to signpost perennial issues across all questions. It is fair to say that there is evidence that an increasing number of centres have already taken this on board and subsequently the achievement of their candidates is highly commendable.

The candidate in this essay demonstrated coherent understanding of the task; based on selection of material to demonstrate emphasis and clarity of ideas. This was a well-structured, fluent response to the task that was expressed cogently through skilful deployment of religious language. The argument was substantiated and clearly reasoned. The question was answered and the choice of scholarship was appropriate and relevant. A very impressive piece of work that shows exemplary control over the topic.

In this essay on Life after Death, I will be referring to New Testament (NT), Life After Death (LAD) and Near Death Experiences (NDEs).

I will be maintaining my line of argument that the NT teachings make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD as the teachings are too contradictory, incoherent and unclear which make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD.

I will be examining the topics of personhood, historicity, desirability, eschatology, alternative forms of evidence, in order to evaluate whether the NT teachings make only a minor contribution to when attempting to understand LAD.

Firstly, I will examine personhood which is the nature of a person and for us to enable an afterlife we must

possess some continuity. I will sustain my line of argument that NT teachings make only a minor contribution ^{when attempting} to understand LAD as the messages are too contradictory ~~and~~

Dualists would disagree and say that the NT make more than only a minor contribution to understand LAD. Plato was a dualist and could find evidence of dualism in the NT. Dualism is the belief that the soul and body are separate and that the physical body is temporary and will perish away. The soul is eternal and once a person dies the soul will enter the 'realm of forms' where truths such as love and justice are. Evidence of NT teachings are ~~"he was gone from their sight"~~ "he was gone from their sight" and "he could walk through walls". These show that in Jesus' LAD he had no physical body and Plato would agree with this and also say these teachings ~~is~~ make more than only a minor contribution ~~to~~ when attempting to understand LAD.

Monists would ~~also~~ also disagree and say the NT makes more than only a minor contribution when attempting to

understand CAD and the NT teachings teach Aristotelian Monism. Aristotle believed that the body was made up of the form (mind) and the matter (body) and is one entity. Evidence of the NT that in Jesus' CAD he had a physical body are "he walked beside them" and "he rolled the stone away" which clearly prove he had a physical body otherwise he wouldn't have been able to do this. St Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians called this 'the resurrection of the flesh'.

In 'On the Road to Emmaus' we are kept from recognising Jesus. If he had a physical body then ~~we would be able to~~ Mary Magdalene would be able to touch him like Thomas did which is unclear and incoherent. Including Dualism and Monism makes the NT confusing and only makes a minor contribution when attempting to understand a CAD.

~~Materialists~~ Materialists would say that we cannot trust anything that we cannot come about empirically. Therefore, they would believe that the NT makes only a minor contribution when attempting

to understand LAD as there is no proof of these teachings.

Although personhood is important because it is an answer to human nature and determines what kind of LAD is possible. For Monists it is the resurrection of the body and dualists would be like the immortality of the soul. However, the ideas are contradictory and fail on personhood as the NT teachings make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD.

Historicity is ~~the~~ how historically authentic a source is. ~~I will maintain~~ Philosophers ~~are~~ ^{are} interested in the truth and therefore whether the NT teachings make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD. I will maintain my line of argument that the NT teachings make only a minor contribution ~~to~~ when attempting to understand LAD.

As already mentioned in the personhood section, there is ~~already~~ ambiguity in the NT teachings. Part of the NT is written symbolically and some written historically which questions historicity.

Ivor Jones and Bowden say "there is a high degree of elaboration" in the NT "in order to convert Jewish readers.

However, the multiple attestations of the empty tomb point towards historicity and suggests truth. All gospels use women as witnesses which is multiply attested and historically authentic. It points towards historicity ~~of the~~ because in 1st century AD women were not appreciated as witnesses. If the gospel writers wanted to fabricate the events of the NT then they would have left out women as witnesses.

~~Historicity~~ NT fails on historicity as it is too incoherent and makes only a minor contribution when attempting to understand CAD.

The earthquake in Matthew is not multiply attested and was only added for a sense of realised eschatology.

In spite of this, ~~the~~ ~~NT~~ concerning with earliest writer, Paul, who did not include the empty tomb in his teachings. If ~~the~~ it was truth, he would have included it in his writings which makes the NT teachings make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand

LAD.

Desirability is suggesting whether it is something to look forward to. The NT depicts a desirable image of a LAD. I will maintain my line of argument that the NT teachings make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD.

Kant thought it was desirable to be rewarded in heaven and therefore found some NT teachings desirable. The Parable of the Sheep and Goats and the Rich Men and Lazarus are ~~two~~.

They state that all good are rewarded in heaven ^{in LAD} and all bad are punished in hell. Kant would not ^{see} the bible as a source of knowledge.

However, others, notably Christians, would see the bible as a source of knowledge and would say that the NT teachings make more than a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD. They would find it desirable to be rewarded in heaven. Polkinghorne said "it is a pleasant thought that God will remember

what is me and recreate it" and "Jesus' resurrections are the foretaste of a LAD". Others who may not be religious but still find NT desirable are Revelations that state, "there will be no more evil or suffering". This makes a LAD desirable as it places a pleasant and peaceful image. Atheists would not find a LAD or NT important as ~~a~~ they do not believe in God and a LAD with a God would not be desirable. Dawkins says our only purpose is to pass on genes and that the ~~NT~~ NT makes only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD. ~~the~~

I agree with Dawkins as if there was an afterlife, what would be the point in this life. The NT is not desirable. I also agree with Hick who quotes, "hell is a blot on God's creation". This is because he believes it takes away God's omnibenevolence.

However, the NT teachings fall on desirability and make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD.

Eschatology is the timings of an

afterlife and is important to understanding LAD. I will sustain my line of argument that the NT teachings make only a minor contribution to LAD and so fail on eschatology.

There are 3 types of eschatology: Present, Heavenly and Futuristic. Present and Heavenly suggest that it is at the point of death that you go to a LAD confirmed by Jesus who says, "I am the resurrection and the life" and " ~~you~~ today you will be with me in paradise". Futuristic contradicts this and is included in the NT teachings that you will go to a LAD which is decided on Judgement Day at the end of time.

However, some scholars say that Futuristic was only included to please Jewish leaders and convert them to Christianity.

Overall, I think on the basis of eschatology, it is a poor excuse as one can't know the agenda of the gospel writers. Also, including 3 eschatologies is unclear and contradictory and therefore ~~only~~ the NT teachings make only a minor contribution when attempting to

understand LAD.

Alternative forms of Evidence are more important to understanding LAD. I am going to look at NDEs as they still happen today which means we can question people and continue to gather evidence. However some say it is not useful as we cannot scientifically test them and only have the person's ^{says of their} experience. Also, it did not occur in everyone who is clinically dead meaning they could have just been bad dreams that people remembered.

They are important as they are multiply attested and share similar features e.g. a bright light and being in a tunnel. NDEs are more reliable than the NT, ^{as they} provide more of an understanding meaning the NT teachings make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD.

To conclude, I have shown by examining personhood, historicity, desirability, eschatology and alternative forms of evidence, that the NT teachings make

only a minor contribution taken attempting to understand LAD as the NT texts are too contradictory, very unclear and incoherent.

The NT ~~is~~ written symbolically to be taken as truth ~~do not provide an~~ ^{make only a minor} contribution, if not any, ~~when~~ ~~at~~ of what an afterlife would look like.

Other evidence such as the Logical Positivist Approach states that ~~the~~ an afterlife is meaningless and we have no empirical evidence. Also, Hicks eschatological verification states we do not know whether God exists or a LAD exists until we die. That is the point in which we know.

However, I fully conclude that the NT teachings make only a minor contribution when attempting to understand LAD due to its inconsistency and contradictions which gives no clear understanding.

Paper Summary

Key Points to Remember:

- Do not ignore the question.
- A generic question is not best answered with a generic answer. The question is made up of two parts. The question itself and the generic phrase 'Examine and comment with reference to the topic you have investigated.' Answer the question.
- Use appropriate sources and, if possible, include recent scholarship.
- Well deployed material will show how well you understand your topic and how you are using your material to answer the question.
- Do not forget to comment on your material in relation to the question.
- Use your evidence to substantiate your argument.
- Comment on alternative views if you know them.
- Express your viewpoint clearly.
- Practice writing under timed conditions as part of your preparation.
- Do not spend too much time on your essay plan to the detriment of the essay itself.
- Write legibly.

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